



**Reprinted and/or reproduced with permission
from the New York City Health Department**

Contents

How to Control Rats

Step One: Look for Evidence

Step Two: Clean Up

Wash Away Droppings and Track Marks

Get Rid of Clutter

Control Weeds, Shrubs and Bushes

Step Three: Starve Them

Manage Your Garbage

Keep Food Away

Step Four: Shut Them Out

Seal Cracks and Small Holes

Fill Large Gaps and Holes

Close Burrows

Step Five: Wipe Them Out

Rodent Baiting

Trapping

Choosing and Working with a Pest Control Company

How to Find the Right Company

Ask Around and Interview Companies

Work Together



How to Control Rats

To control rats, you have to remove everything they need to survive: food, water, shelter and ways to get around.

Step One: Look for Evidence



Burrow



Rat droppings



Gnaw marks on garbage cans



Burrow



Rub marks



Burrow

- Look for places where rats live. Most rats live in nests or burrows. Burrows are holes in dirt or concrete from one to four inches wide, with smooth edges. Burrows can be found under bushes and plants. They will often have an entrance and exit hole.
- Look for droppings. They are often found close to garbage. If they're moist and dark, it's a sign that rats are in the area.
- Look for holes and gnaw marks on wood and plastic garbage cans.
- Check walls and grass for signs of runways. Rats run along the same path many times a day, leaving dark greasy track marks along walls and worn down paths in grass.



• Rats come out at night, so walk around outside with a flashlight after dark. This will help you see where rats are going, so you can check for burrows when it gets light.

Runways and tracks



Gnaw marks



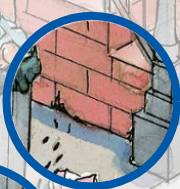
Gnaw marks



Rat droppings



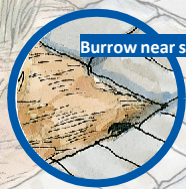
Rat droppings



Gnaw marks on trash bags



Burrow near sidewalk



Step Two: Clean Up

Wash Away Droppings and Track Marks

Rats communicate and attract each other through their urine and droppings.

- Sweep up droppings and clean up dark greasy track marks. Wash down the area with water and a mild bleach solution (one part bleach, 10 parts water).
- Talk to your neighbors and work together to clean up, so rats don't move from one place to another.

Get Rid of Clutter

Clutter gives rats lots of places to hide, sleep, nest and reproduce.

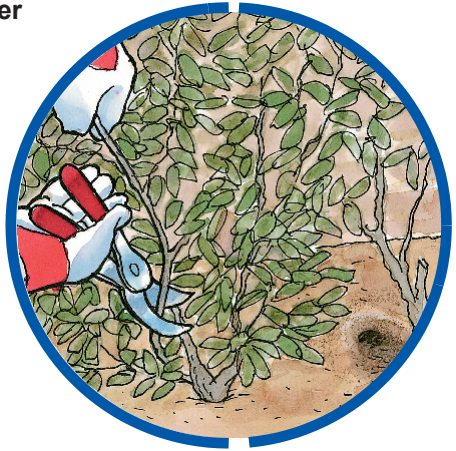
- Remove (and recycle) piles of newspapers, paper bags, cardboard and bottles.
- Clear out your basement and yard.
- Store items away from walls and off the ground.



Control Weeds, Shrubs and Bushes

Rats are often found in burrows under bushes and plants.

- Keep tall grass, bushes, shrubs and mulch away from building foundations. Pull out ivy around burrows.
- Keep ground bare six inches from buildings, and trim under shrubs.
- Make space between plants and avoid dense planting.
- Keep gardens free of weeds and trash.



Step Three: Starve Them

Rats only need 1.28 grams (one ounce) of food each day. Don't make your garbage their food.

Manage Your Garbage

- Bring garbage cans and bags to the curb as close to pick-up time as possible. Leaving them out overnight invites rats.
- Make sure you have enough garbage cans to hold trash between pickups.
- Use hard plastic or metal cans with tight fitting lids.
- Insist that tenants put garbage *inside* cans.

Keep Food Away

- Keep all food in tightly sealed containers.
- Don't put food out for stray cats, pigeons or squirrels.

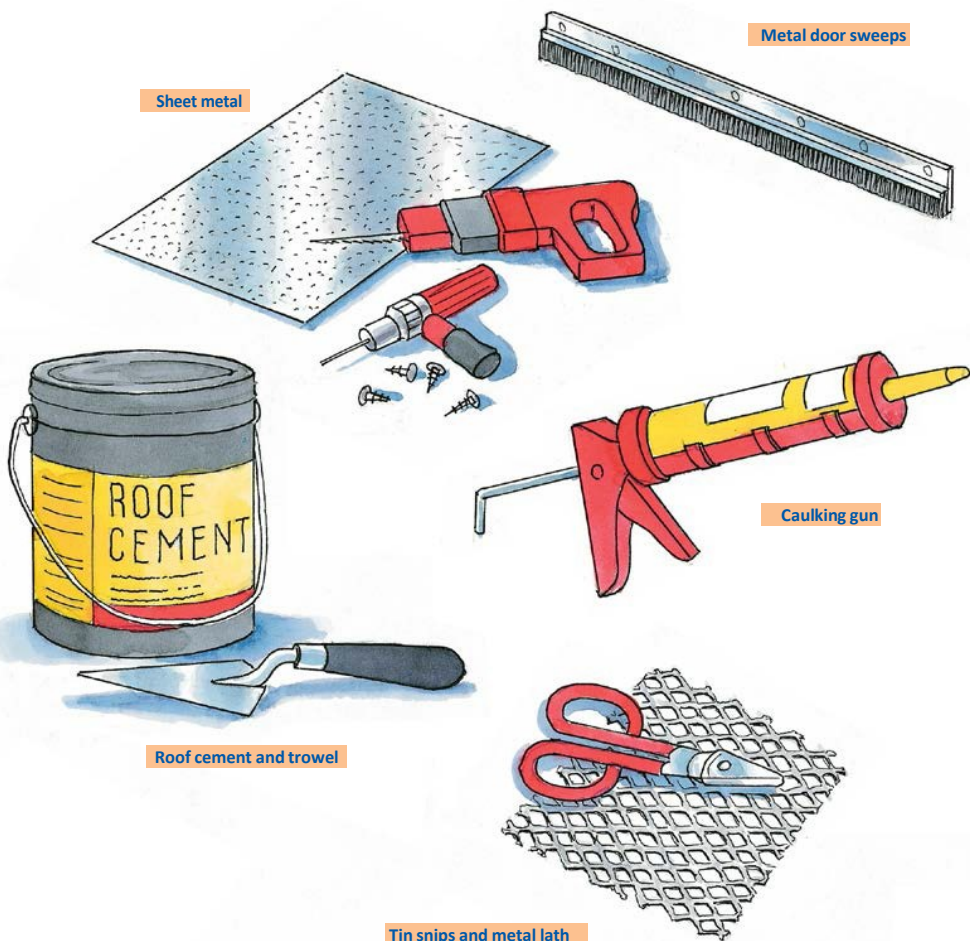


Step Four: Shut Them Out

Rats chew holes into buildings, and can squeeze through cracks and holes as small as 1.27 cm (a half inch). To keep rats out for good, seal all holes and cracks in foundations, walls, floors, underneath doors and around windows. Most repairs can be done by maintenance staff, superintendents, handy persons or pest control professionals. Materials are inexpensive and available at most hardware stores.

Sheet metal

Metal door sweeps



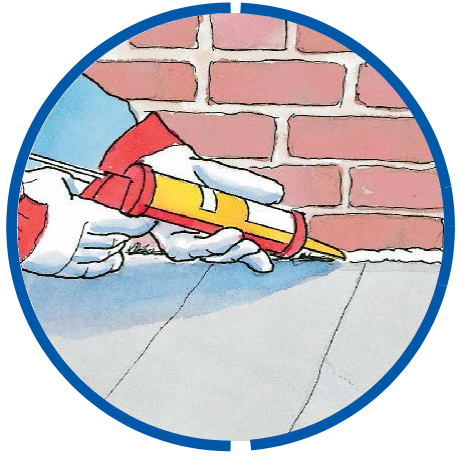
Caulking gun

Roof cement and trowel

Tin snips and metal lath

Seal Cracks and Small Holes

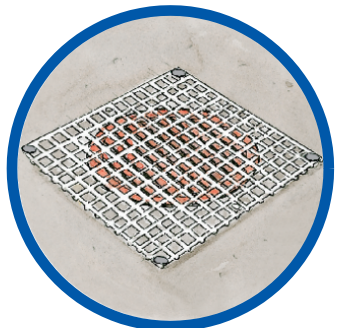
- Seal cracks and small holes with caulk or use roofing cement – it's durable and easily applied with a caulking gun.
- Close gaps under doors with rodent-resistant metal door sweeps.
- Close window gaps with metal flashing.
- Put screens on vents, especially on lower floors.



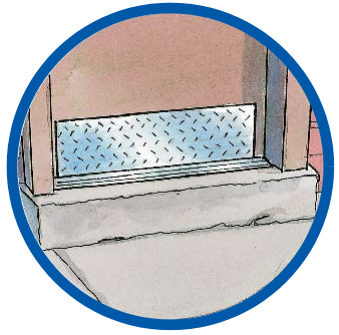
Fill Large Gaps and Holes

The way to close large gaps and holes depends on the building material and amount of space behind the hole.

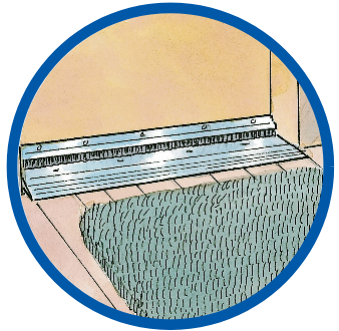
- Use mortar or ready-mix cement to fill gaps and holes in cement and stone foundations. Cover large holes with metal lath or screening, then seal with mortar or cement.
- Cover floor drains and vents with heavy-duty metal screening, secured with masonry nails or cement.



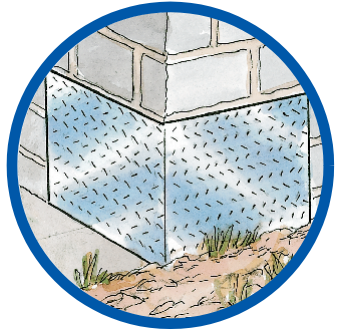
- Install sheet metal kick plates on the lower exterior of doors where rats have been gnawing or entering the building. Install metal thresholds underneath.



- Use door sweeps to keep gaps under doors smaller than a quarter inch.



- Consider installing heavy gauge sheet metal between foundations and the ground.



- Seal pipes leading into walls with escutcheon plates ("pipe collars"). Check pipes regularly for leaks.



Close Inactive Burrows

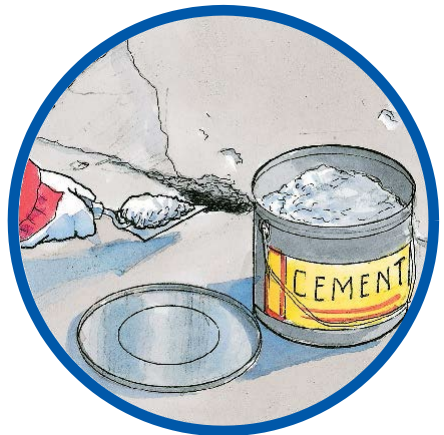
An inactive burrow will often have leaves, cobwebs or other debris around the entrance. These burrows should be closed so rats can't get back in.



- Close burrows in soil by filling with soil and tamping down with a shovel, or by stepping on them.



- Close burrows in cracked or broken sidewalks with metal filler and cement.



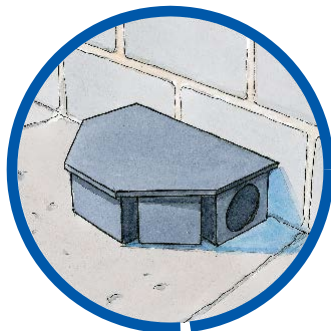
Step Five: Wipe Them Out

Rodent Baiting

Rodent bait is a common way of controlling rats but applying these poisons is a job for professionals. If you use a pesticide to control your pest problem, read the label to make sure you are choosing the right product for the right pest. Follow all label directions and warnings carefully. Always look for a Pest Control Products (PCP) number on the label so you know the product has been approved by Health Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/pest-control-tips/rats-mice.html>

Make sure your pest control company follows these guidelines:

- Always read and follow the manufacturer's label, and use the smallest effective amount of bait.
- Use disposable gloves when handling bait and wash your hands afterwards.
- Use secured bait chunks (called bait "blocks") inside tamper-resistant bait stations. Secure or anchor bait stations to the ground or fence with cement, caulk or wire.
- Place bait stations on the same path as rats normally travel – often along building walls and fence lines. Since rats always travel on the same path, they're more likely to eat from stations along it.



- Replace bait after it's been eaten. Leave bait stations and bait in place for at least two weeks after all rat activity has stopped. Monitor on a monthly basis.

Trapping

There are several types of traps that can be used to control rats. Snap traps and electronic traps are easy to use and very effective if well positioned and set properly.



Choosing and Working with a Pest Control Company

How to Find the Right Company

Ask Around and Interview Companies

- Ask your neighbors and friends for referrals.
- Look in the phone book and online for “integrated pest management” services. These companies are more likely to inspect, monitor and make recommendations and repairs.
- Interview companies. Ask for references, including previous customers.

A good company will...

- Inspect your property before giving you a price quote.
- Give you a written inspection report, and an action plan.
- Base quotes on inspection findings, not flat fees. The cheapest services are rarely the best.
- Make referrals for structural repair, if required.
- Visit often until the job is done.
- Put bait in tamper-resistant containers.
- Employ qualified, well-trained exterminators.

- Educate you on how to prevent rats.
- Work with you until rats are gone.

Work Together

- Walk around with the pest control professional during each visit, and keep track of work.
- Agree on a service plan and the cost.
- Follow-up on referrals and recommendations.